I: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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133 tains. From each pocket between these mountains an ice-
cold affluent comes swirling down to the main river. The
137 predominant tree in the river valleys is the cedar[4] which in
many cases attains great girth and height. Cottonwoods
flourish in places, and everywhere there is an almost impene-
trable undergrowth of devil's club, berry bushes, and other
shrubbery of almost tropical density. On the lower slopes of
the mountains, moss-festooned pines and spruces are the most
common trees, gradually becoming smaller and fewer until the
133 barren peaks are reached. The mountains rise so precipitously
that their snowcaps and glaciers seem to overhang the valley,
a narrow ribbon of green winding far below. The range of
vision from the bank of the river is limited by the all-encircling
mountains. Here and there a distant vista opens up to expose
peak after peak, but on the whole there is a feeling of confine-
ment, in contrast with the open wastes of the upper country
where the Bella Coola rises. Mountains, forests, flowing water,
these are the three dominant impressions of the country (see
Plate 6).

136 The mammals of central British Columbia, although com-
paratively common, have never been of primary importance.
[291] The marten, the wolverine, the lynx, and bears, both black
and grizzly, were formerly hunted for their skins to serve as
[262] cloaks. Deer were killed whenever possible, but formed a
negligible item of diet. The beaver also was prized for its
[439] flesh. The skins of moose and caribou were traded from the
Carrier Indians, but neither of these animals was found in the
[286] Bella Coola area. The mammal of greatest economic impor-
[237] tance was the mountain goat, the wool of which was woven into
[251] blankets. Smoked goat meat was formerly found in every
[262] house and was almost the only flesh available during the
[223] winter. Small game was abundant, but seals were a luxury.
Neither were birds of great importance to the Bella Coola.
Members of the tribe resident near the sea-coast used to kill

[4] Appendix C contains a glossary of the scientific names of the flora and fauna mentioned in this monograph.

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211 in the appearance of the poles. Sometimes one is erected at
*556 the front door of the house with an opening at its base through
778 which all must pass to enter the house, or a pole may be solid
532 and stand on the opposite side of the sidewalk; the choice in
[184] either case depending upon the usage recorded in the ancestral myth. Instead of a totem-pole, a chief may display his ancestral cloaks by means of paintings on the front wall of his house, or by carved house-posts supporting the longitudinal beams, if such had been used by his ancestors. Moreover, a chief entitled to display a totem-pole may choose to use only paintings. If he validates these by presents, they give him the same dignity and importance as a totem-pole, particularly if he cannot validate its construction by lavish gifts. Most Bella Coola poles are only about fifteen to twenty feet in height, and though
[171] it is possible that a few families had prerogatives entitling them to construct lofty poles, such as used by the Haida, it is unlikely that such were ever common.

When a chief who has erected a totem-pole before his house gives another potlatch, he may wish to put up a second pole beside the first. Occasionally two or three poles stand before the house of a chief, but one is more frequent or even none at
[764] all. At death the pole is often taken to the cemetery where it acts as a memorial-post (I, p. 461). Otherwise it remains standing until some other occupant of the house wishes to erect another in its place, when the first is pulled down and neglected.

Coppers

*556 The Bella Coola use coppers for only two purposes: casting
[769] on the ground upon which the representation of a deceased relative had trodden, or throwing into the fire when the figure has left the house. In either case, they are said to "make bone for the dead." Although used but rarely, the occasion when a copper is employed is so important that to obtain one and increase its value is a vital consideration for every chief.

[177 Most of the coppers now used by the Bella Coola are made
439]

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of metal obtained from the white man, if not actually machine-made for trading purposes. They resemble the familiar shape found in all parts of the British Columbia coast and vary in length from about six inches to as much as three feet. There is considerable difference in thickness; some of the newer ones are thin plates, others are heavy and appear to be old. The early white traders realized the value placed by the Indians on their coppers and these were soon imitated and became important articles of barter. The Bella Coola state that many of the early Hudson's Bay Company's coppers were made of drawn wire, but this type seems to have passed out of existence, since all the specimens seen in Bella Coola consisted of flat metal plaques.

The Bella Coola maintain that their ancestors have, ever since the beginning of time, used two kinds of coppers. One variety, known as *lálie*, resembled the plaques produced by white men. This is the term in common usage for all kinds of coppers at the present time. The other variety, *tsitsaimy*, is said to have been thicker and heavier and was made by heating the metal in a fire, beating it into the required shape. Long, long ago, coppers of this kind were sometimes found in the forest by hunters who were thus rewarded for observance of ceremonial chastity, but most were obtained in trade from the northern tribes. One of these is said to be preserved at Kimsquit, but none is said to have been owned by a Bella Coola within the last few years.

The Bella Coola believe that *tsitsaimy* can only be manufactured in one district, far to the north, at the mouth of an unknown river. There, it is said, the chiefs range themselves along the river bank, each armed with a spear, and each with a number of slaves behind him. When the tide is highest, salmon of some peculiar kind appear at the surface of the water. If one comes within reach of a spearman, he lunges at it, but invariably misses; then the chief drops his spear, seizes one of his slaves and kills him by cutting his throat. A small piece of

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

the front-door facing the river, but has to leave the house through the trap beneath the enclosure where she sleeps. The Bella Coola consider it unthinkable for a girl to disregard these prohibitions, but if this should happen, she would be chased home by her parents, by the Guardian of the River, or, in fact, by any elderly member of the community. The strongest reason for respecting these regulations is the belief that disobedience brings death; no one knows how it is inflicted, but a careless girl soon dies. During this period she cannot eat fresh salmon, though she is allowed them if they have been smoked for four or five days. Her scanty meals are brought to her in the enclosure where she is virtually a prisoner. It is true that she can leave it and wander in the woods, but her comrades avoid her as being in an unclean condition of which they are afraid, and she is barred from taking part in all activities by the river which constitute so large a part of the life of the Bella Coola. A girl cannot pick berries during this time, as no more would grow in the valley which she had thus defiled; she must not touch anyone, nor allow anyone to touch her; she must not pass in front of a man; she must go to bed before everyone else in the house, and be the last to arise. The danger of breaking some taboo is so great that it is safer for a girl to remain within her enclosure where her mother, and other old women, gather to tell her the many things which it is fitting for an adult woman to know. This seclusion is not pleasant, but it unquestionably serves to emphasize the importance of married life to which it is a prelude. The writer remembers an occasion when a Bella Coola family was eating tasty fresh salmon while one of the daughters, who had recently reached adolescence, watched enviously. Her grandfather rose and gave the child an orange, remarking that in his youth little girls did not receive such dainties to ameliorate their lot.

Adolescent girls wear certain distinctive articles of clothing and ornaments. The most noticeable is a skull-cap bound with grass; this is the only time in a woman's life that a hat is worn. She also wears ear-rings, each consisting of a neat

1/4 Lie - one year after puberty - ANALYST

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bundle of four macaroni-shaped shells, probably *Dentalium*, which are said to have been imported from the north in early times. These marks serve to indicate the position of the girl, who is both feared and respected, possessed of supernatural power, and yet baneful. Many Bella Coola stories describe how adolescent girls have been able to vanquish supernatural beings; perhaps the most striking of these is the manner in which they once saved mankind when the sun came too close to the earth. At the end of a year, or eleven months according to one old woman, the seclusion is terminated, and the girl resumes her normal activities. The first time she goes to the river she must throw on the water four pieces of dyed, and four *pieces of undyed cedar-bark*. This is especially important if the salmon are running at the time, although no explanation of this ritual is given.

The resumption of her freedom indicates that a girl has reached marriageable age. Chiefs sometimes confine their daughters for even longer than a year, and usually delay their marriages for several years to demonstrate their importance; but this is not necessary, nor is it practised by other than wealthy individuals. It is not uncommon for a girl to wed before her year is out; in that case her restrictions automatically lapse. Chiefs never allow such a curtailment for their daughters; to do so would diminish the prestige of the latter, and be detrimental to the status of their children when they marry and have families. Illicit intercourse with a secluded adolescent is considered not only illegal but disgusting as well. Between the period of confinement and marriage, intercourse is prohibited and guarded against by the parents of a girl, but is not considered filthy and seems to have been fairly common in former times with the daughters of poor people and slaves. This sometimes took place before the first menstruation in spite of the disapproval with which this was regarded.

Although the menstrual blood which appears at the first discharge is considered more baneful than that emitted on later occasions, it is always regarded as uncanny or unclean. It is

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Tsimshian NE15

these accounts seemed to be exaggerations, and the casualties were probably few. The Bella Coola did not have the same admiration for the successful warrior as for the man who gave many potlatches, while everything indicates that their raids were on a small scale, rendered singularly ineffective by lack of discipline.

Specific Accounts

Active warfare has been so long discontinued on the coast that none of the living Bella Coola can describe conditions as they existed during hostilities. It was possible to collect the following accounts of raids and adventures which, though individually of small value, illustrate tactics and strategy, and recount incidents which throw light on the frame of mind of the participants.

Kitkatla War

For many years there was animosity between the Bella Coola and the Kitkatla who, with the advantage of strong government, used to sweep down from the north for salmon and slaves. Bella Coola itself was comparatively immune from attack, but the Kimsquit people suffered severely. The attackers were not always successful; one old man related how, when his mother's mother was an infant, they were driven off with the loss of four canoes and many men. The fact that this incident had been remembered for so many years indicates that it was unusual.

Slaves captured in this way were traded from tribe to tribe and rarely escaped. When an elderly Bella Coola was a lad, there was considerable excitement in the community owing to the return of *Slukwala*, a woman who had been carried off when a girl. She had been traded to a northern tribe among whom, she said, it was customary to crush captives beneath totem-poles and house-posts. Her diligence saved her from this fate, and she was passed on until she reached the far north, on the

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Tsimshian NE15

B T 567 [439]

shore of a river where "the white men got money stone." Then *Stukwala* began to go south, and was finally sold to an important chief living north of Port Simpson. He used to beat her; in fact, she carried the scars with her to her grave. *Stukwala*'s master had another slave, a male Bella Bella, with whom the woman was on friendly terms since she was related by blood to a Bella Bella family and could speak that language. Angered by her harsh treatment, *Stukwala* suggested to her companion in misfortune that they kill their master and escape. The man was at first unwilling, but she assured him that she knew the route southward. The conspirators awaited their opportunity which came when their master went halibut fishing, accompanied only by his two slaves. One evening *Stukwala* cooked a large meal for him which made him drowsy as he sat by the fire; then she stole behind him, picked up an axe, and killed him by hitting him over the head. The two murderers carefully scraped up all the blood, tied stones to the corpse, and sank it in deep water so that their master's friends would believe that he had been drowned with his slaves. Then the two, having stolen a canoe, paddled off, hiding by day, and subsisting on what shell-fish they could gather. After many perils they reached Bella Bella, whence *Stukwala* returned home.

She had been carried off as a mere girl, but was past the age of child-bearing when she returned and had almost forgotten her native language. The Bella Coola were keenly interested in the tale of her adventures, and especially in the way that slaves were buried in Alaska. It was assumed that some of their own captives must have been killed in that way, so a slave from the far north was crushed in revenge. It is said that this custom was common among the northern tribes from whom the Bella Coola adopted several practices, although this particular one was carried out but once.

B [648] [177]

B 648 721 T 622 648 721

The most famous Kitkatla chief, and the one most dreaded by the Bella Coola, was *Tokus*, who is said to have had almost despotic powers over his northern warriors. The name itself was transmitted from one holder to another, but the most

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*539 [237] As soon as the weather moderated, the rest of the party returned, each carrying enough marten skins for at least one blanket. Some had so many that three or four cloaks could be made, in addition to the large supplies of smoked goat meat and grease.

THE SUCCESS OF A LAZY HUNTER

*539 224 [177] [411] [439] In the early days, when the visit of a trading vessel to Bella Coola was a rare event, it is remembered that an *Ăsăn·ăn·i* chief bought a musket from the captain of the *Beaver*. He paid for it a pile of beaver-skins which, when stacked up, was equal in height to the length of the weapon. This was one of the first muskets owned by a Bella Coola and the chief took great care of it, never treating it roughly, and hanging it with ropes from the roof of his house whenever he was not actually using it. One day a certain *Snäkelt* asked the owner to lend him the musket to hunt goats. This was no slight request, and it was surprising, since *Snäkelt* was not a hunter, but merely packed in meat killed by others. At first the chief was unwilling to allow his prized weapon out of his sight, but at last consented when *Snäkelt* promised to give him half the goats that he might kill.

Snäkelt probably thought that even temporary possession of the mysterious musket would make it possible for him to kill goats, but when he had climbed up into the mountains, and stalked for hours, he had not succeeded even in approaching one. He knew that if he returned home, unsuccessful and without some plausible excuse, he would be laughed to scorn, so he determined to cover his failure. First he beat the musket on a boulder until it was bent and battered, then he took a sharp rock and pounded himself until he was covered with blood from head to foot, as if he had been caught in a land-slide. When near the village, he lay down on the ground and called faintly for help; at first the people could not locate the sound, but after a short search someone found the would-be hunter, apparently in the last stages of exhaustion. Help was called, and *Snäkelt* carried home, moaning feebly and saying that he would die. He could just whisper that he had been caught in a slide on the other side of the mountain, this explanation being necessary since no one had heard one in the near vicinity. As the apparent sufferer was lying in his house, one man noticed that the patient's wounds were from gashes, not from bruises, and loudly protested that *Snäkelt* must have mutilated himself to conceal his lack of success. Everyone came crowding around and agreed that this must be the case; *Snäkelt* finally admitted the deception and congratulated his discoverer on his powers of observation. After a few days, he was as well as ever, but the chief had lost his precious musket.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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tacles; metal coal-oil cans are found convenient for this purpose and have almost replaced watertight boxes. After repeated stirrings and skimmings, all that remains is a mass of putrid flesh, bearing no resemblance whatever to the fish from which it came. The Kitlobe are said to compress this into cakes for eating, but the Bella Coola throw it away. Some cooks bail out the dregs by hand, but many of the box-kettles have a bung-hole at the bottom which, when opened, allows the semi-liquid remains to flow out into a rough trough leading to the river. As soon as one batch of olachen has thus been disposed of, another is boiled and refined in the same way. The grease keeps indefinitely and is a useful article of barter with the Carriers as well as a staple of Bella Coola diet. Although the preparation removes much of its offensive odour, olachen grease has an unpleasant taste to the white man.

During the boiling, all other activities are suspended and the people spend practically all their time on the river bank. If the fish are allowed to rot too long, much of the grease is lost, so men, women, and children are pressed into service to make the most of the short period. The men rise at dawn to start the fires on the bank, the women and children follow with food, and for several days the whole village camps, as if on a picnic, amid an indescribably foul smell that almost sickens anyone passing within hundreds of yards. There are tasks for everyone; the fish must be carried from the pits to the furnaces, wood must be brought, the fires stoked, the kettles stirred, the grease carried away, the fireplaces repaired, food cooked, and a hundred other chores. It is a scene of great activity, carried on with good humour and merriment, for the Bella Coola realize that they are storing up luxuries for the following winter. Even the dogs seem to share the general excitement, and do not disdain to eat the dregs from the kettles, which, when emptied into the river, attract numerous trout and gulls, to the joy of small boys with hunting desires.

BELLA COOLA CANOES

Although travel and transport by water is still as vital to the Bella Coola as it was to their fathers, the motor-boat is fast replacing the canoe, and the science of manufacturing their own craft is being lost. In former times several types were constructed, but only one of these is still employed —the spoon canoe, *sā·tla*, used on rivers (see Plate 21). These vary from twenty to thirty feet or more in length, and are about four feet wide; they are without keels, and there is no difference between the bow and stern. Although one man can handle such a craft in smooth water, at least two are required for a journey of any length, and four is the usual crew. The captain, who is either the best waterman or the one most familiar with the route, stands in the stern, the second in command in